



RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education

K-12 Health and Safety Guidance for School-based Summer Programs 6/3/2021

In an effort to align Rhode Island's guidance for schools with the CDC's guidance for operational strategies for schools ([CDC Transmission of COVID in schools](#); [Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools](#)), as well as the Governor's Executive Orders, this document shall serve as the health and safety guidance for all school-based summer program (such as Extended School Year (ESY)*, summer school or credit recovery, and enrichment programs). This guidance is based upon our belief that all students deserve the same access to in-person learning and our increased understanding of COVID-19 and its limited spread in our highly mitigated school settings, national and local data and research, and increased vaccination rates. This guidance may be revised at a later date when/if revisions are made to the CDC guidance for schools. Summer camps should follow the [Summer Camp Guidance 2021](#).

Note: PreK-12 schools and childcare providers may adopt policies that are stricter than State guidelines.

** Extended School Year (ESY) (for more information, see the [Reference Guide to the Regulations Governing the Education of Children with Disabilities](#): page 29)*

Ongoing Communication and Support

- To support LEAs throughout the summer, RIDE will maintain the regional pod model of support. This structure allows every LEA and private school in Rhode Island to have a designated team who responds to questions and provides direct support. For health and safety specific questions, schools can reach out to the Education Operations Center at: EDOC@ride.ri.gov. For ESY programming questions, schools can reach out to their RIDE Office of Student, Community and Academic Supports contact person or call Karen Lovett at 401-222-8333 for assistance. Parents with ESY program questions may contact the RIDE Special Education Call Center at 401-222-8999 or email to RIDECallCenter@ride.ri.gov.
- Consistent with health equity considerations, schools and school districts should conduct active and specific outreach to the families of ESY students to communicate their summer programming policies and practices.



Distance Learning

- For summer programming, **LEAs are no longer required to provide a distance learning option for students/families.** They should plan on how services will be provided if a student must remain home for short periods of time due to illness or quarantine.
- Prolonged periods of remote or virtual learning can have negative effects on educational progress for students, potentially slowing or reversing academic gains. Students from low-resourced communities, English learners, and students with disabilities might disproportionately experience learning loss due to limited access to remote learning technology and fewer learning support systems and services outside of schools. Safe in-person schooling can also offset the negative social, emotional, and mental health impacts of prolonged virtual learning. In Rhode Island, schools remain one of the safest places for students, teachers, and school staff with regard to COVID-19 exposure. Only **5.2% of PreK-12 cases in Rhode Island have been reported as due to possible school-based exposures:** since last September, 494 out of 9,450 of the PreK-12 students and staff diagnosed with COVID-19 had exposure to COVID-19 in school or a school-related activity as their only possible exposure.
- Families of [students who are at increased risk of severe illness](#) (including those with special healthcare needs) or who live with people at high risk should meet with their district and review their Health Plan, 504 Plan, and/or IEP. [One way to protect the health of children is to ensure that all adults in a household are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.](#) If schools need assistance in accessing vaccination appointments for their staff, students, and/or families, they can contact: EDOC@ride.ri.gov.
- Schools may wish to send the [Checklist: Planning for In-Person Classes](#) to families preparing to send their child in-person for the first time since the pandemic began.

Group Size Limits

- Schools are encouraged to continue to use a stable group model for their summer programs. Stable groups are designed to spend all or most of the day together as a group. This means that the same group of staff and students should be grouped together as much as possible.
- Stable groups should not exceed 30 individuals. This capacity includes both students and staff.



Physical Distancing

- **Non-stable Groups:** Continue to require 3 feet of physical distance from one another. Schools may choose to implement physical distancing for all students and staff regardless of vaccination status.
- **Stable Groups:** Physical distancing of 3 feet is recommended (when possible) but is not required within each stable group. Maintain 6 feet of physical distance between stable groups. For example, if groups are gathering in a gymnasium as part of the daily activity, the groups must be arranged in the gymnasium so there is at least 6 feet separating each stable group on all sides from the other groups.
- At least 3 feet of physical distancing is required for non-stable and stable groups while eating and drinking without a mask indoors.

Classroom Layouts and Use of School Spaces

- **General Spacing and Movement:** Stable groups should occupy consistent space as much as possible. When shared space is used by multiple stable groups or by students who are not in stable groups, disinfecting should occur in between the times when stable groups or groups of students use the space.
- **Classroom Layout:** The spacing of desks/tables should allow for at least 3 feet of spacing between individual students/staff. The largest classes should be held in the largest spaces.
- **Assigned seating:** Teachers are required to have seating charts with assigned student seats.
- **Bathrooms:** Bathrooms should be cleaned and disinfected regularly in line with [CDC Guidance](#).
- **Dining/Cafeterias:** Students at all grade levels must eat at least 3 feet away from one another while indoors. Strategies to limit the amount of time students are unmasked during lunchtime should be utilized. If more than one stable group utilizes the same larger space for meals at the same time, a minimum distance of 6 feet must be maintained at all times between stable groups. When possible, outdoor dining is encouraged.

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Hand Hygiene

Schools should utilize the [CDC Guidance](#) for cleaning, disinfection, and hand hygiene.



Face Coverings

- Fully vaccinated: Staff and students who are fully vaccinated need to wear masks indoors in school settings, with certain exceptions (see below).
- Non-vaccinated:
 - **Indoors.** Mask use indoors is required for people who are not vaccinated, including children. No child under the age of 2 should wear a mask.
 - **Outdoors.** The State does not require mask-wearing when outdoors. However, people who are not vaccinated are encouraged to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more within a 24-hour period) with other people who are not fully vaccinated.
- Schools with universal mask policies, regardless of vaccination status, should make exceptions for the following categories of people:
 - Children under the age of 2 years
 - A person with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of a disability as defined by the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).
 - A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations.
- Schools should refer to [CDC guidance](#) for the use and care of masks.

Screening Students and Staff

Staff and students should continue to screen for COVID-19 symptoms each day. Parents must screen students at home prior to sending them to school. The school can decide to conduct daily attestations using a form such as the [Reopening RI self-attestation form](#) or schools can opt for a one-time attestation where staff and parents sign-off that they will conduct symptom screening each day prior to attending the summer program. Temperature checks are no longer required.

School Visitors

Visitors may enter the school building, but limits should still be considered. A 30-day log of all visitors is strongly recommended. Logs should document the date, contact phone number, and arrival/departure times. All visitors must comply with the LEA's or school's COVID-19 policies and protocols.



Busing and Student Transportation

- Unless noted below, all existing mitigation measures outlined in the [Transportation Guidance](#) should remain in place.
- Students are seated to physically distance as much as possible with a maximum occupancy of 75% of vehicle seating capacity for all vehicles used for student transport (e.g. school bus, van, or other vehicle).
- Household members should sit together in the same seat when possible.
- All students have assigned seats on the bus. Students are encouraged to ride the same bus to and from school whenever possible.
- When feasible, the same group of students should be assigned to the same bus every day. Locations for drop-off and pick-up should remain the same and drivers and staff helping with busing should remain the same for each bus as much as possible.
- When a passenger is confirmed to have COVID-19 (tests positive), there may be up to 29 close contacts of the person who may need to quarantine. On a bus, close contacts of a confirmed case are those who were seated two rows in front, two rows behind, and the same five rows on opposite side of the aisle as the positive case (see the [Outbreak Response Playbook: PK-12](#) for reference). In addition, anyone within 6 feet of the individual for greater than 15 minutes is a close contact.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- For vaccinated staff working with students who are unable to wear face coverings (other than a face shield): In alignment with [CDC guidance](#), this staffing group can wear N95, KN95, or a well fitted medical procedure mask as long as they are not involved in a task that could expose them to bodily fluids. It is advisable for staff performing any supportive tasks that may involve exposure to bodily fluids to wear gloves and an apron/gown, mask (non-cloth) and eye protection for splash protection (as outlined by the [CDC](#)).
- If any staff have underlying immunocompromised conditions, they may wish to consult their doctor about any additional PPE.
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- When in close contact with, or treating, a patient suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 recommended PPE includes N-95 respirator (or face mask if N-95 is unavailable), eye protection (goggles or face shield), gloves, and gown.

Responding to Staff or Students who are Sick

- Schools should continue to follow [The Outbreak Response Protocols: PreK-12](#).
- As soon as possible, all items touched by the staff member or student who is ill at school must be removed, cleaned, and disinfected. Any common surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected as well. If possible, items should be moved, windows should be opened, or other measures should be instituted to increase ventilation while cleaning. Additional guidance can be found at [CDC: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#).